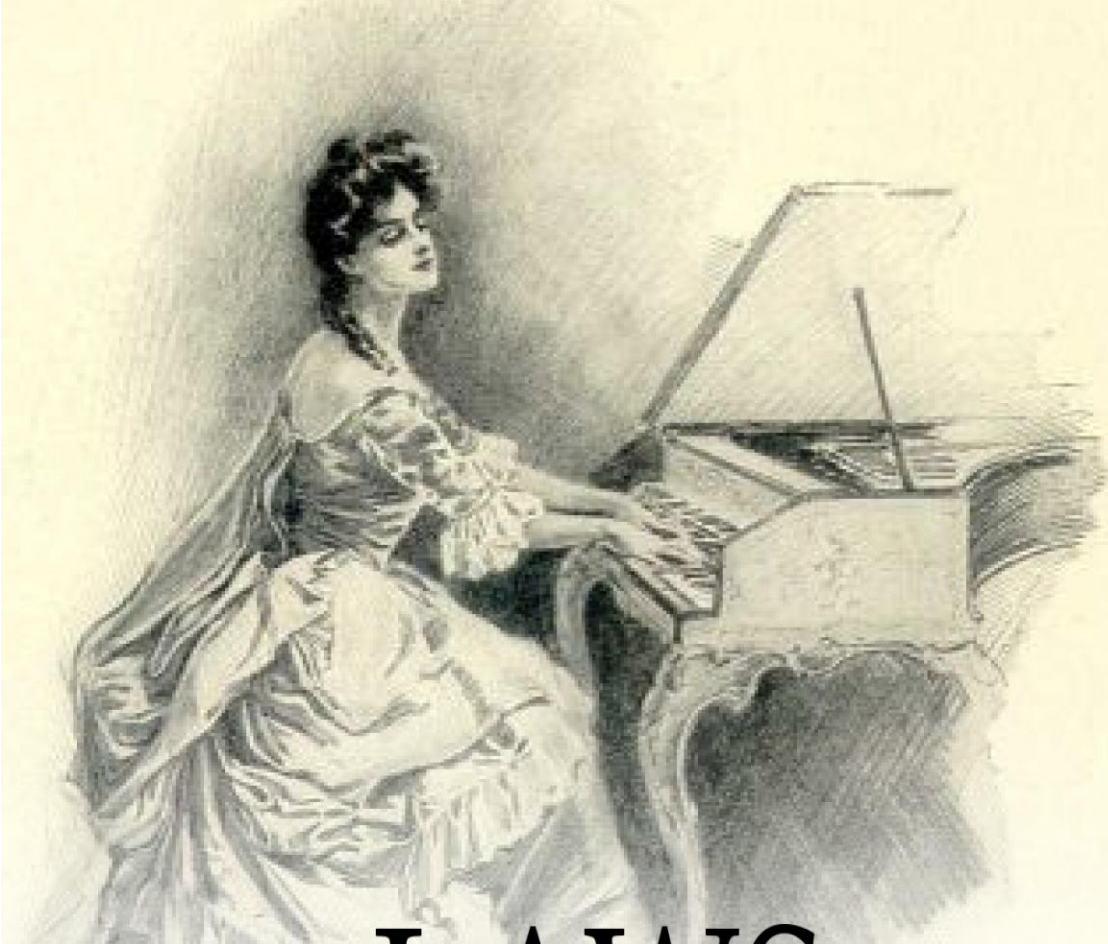

THE LAWS OF ETIQUETTE

A GENTLEMAN

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THE LAWS OF ETIQUETTE

SHORT RULES AND REFLECTIONS FOR CONDUCT IN SOCIETY

* * *

A GENTLEMAN

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The Laws of Etiquette
Short Rules and Reflections for Conduct in Society
From a 1836 edition.

ISBN 978-1-775413-99-8

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Preface

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The author of the present volume has endeavoured to embody, in as short a space as possible, some of the results of his own experience and observation in society, and submits the work to the public, with the hope that the remarks which are contained in it, may prove available for the benefit of others. It is, of course, scarcely possible that anything original should be found in a volume like this: almost all that it contains must have fallen under the notice of every man of penetration who has been in the habit of frequenting good society. Many of the precepts have probably been contained in works of a similar character which have appeared in England and France since the days of Lord Chesterfield. Nothing however has been copied from them in the compilation of this work, the author having in fact scarcely any acquaintance with books of this description, and many years having elapsed since he has opened even the pages of the noble oracle. He has drawn entirely from his own resources, with the exception of some hints for arrangement, and a

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few brief reflections, which have been derived from the French.

The present volume is almost apart from criticism. It has no pretensions to be judged as a literary work—its sole merit depending upon its correctness and fitness of application. Upon these grounds he ventures to hope for it a favourable reception.

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Introduction

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The great error into which nearly all foreigners and most Americans fall, who write or speak of society in this country, arises from confounding the political with the social system. In most other countries, in England, France, and all those nations whose government is monarchical or aristocratic, these systems are indeed similar. Society is there intimately connected with the government, and the distinctions in one are the origin of gradations in the other. The chief part of the society of the kingdom is assembled in the capital, and the same persons who legislate for the country legislate also for it. But in America the two systems are totally unconnected, and altogether different in character. In remodelling the form of the administration, society remained unrepublican. There is perfect freedom of political privilege, all are the same upon the hustings, or at a political meeting; but this equality does not extend to the drawing-room or the parlour. None are excluded from the highest councils of the nation, but it does not follow

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that all can enter into the highest ranks, of society. In point of fact, we think that there is more exclusiveness in the society of this country, than there is in that even of England—far more than there is in France. And the explanation may perhaps be found in the fact which we hate mentioned above. There being there less danger of permanent disarrangement or confusion of ranks by the occasional admission of the low-born aspirant, there does not exist the same necessity for a jealous guarding of the barriers as there does here. The distinction of classes, also, after the first or second, is actually more clearly defined, and more rigidly observed in America, than in any country of Europe. Persons unaccustomed to look searchingly at these matters, may be surprised to hear it; but we know from observation, that there are among the respectable, in any city of the United States, at least ten distinct ranks. We cannot, of course, here point them out, because we could not do it without mentioning names.

Every man is naturally desirous of finding entrance into the best society of his country, and it becomes therefore a matter of importance to ascertain what qualifications are demanded for admittance.

A writer who is popularly unpopular, has remarked, that the test of standing in Boston, is literary eminence; in New York, wealth; and in Philadelphia, purity of blood.

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To this remark, we can only oppose our opinion, that none of these are indispensable, and none of them sufficient. The society of this country, unlike that of England, does not court literary talent. We have cases in our recollection, which prove the remark, in relation to the highest ranks, even of Boston. Wealth has no pretensions to be the standard anywhere. In New York, the Liverpool of America, although the rich may make greater display and *bruit,* yet all of the merely rich, will find that there does exist a small and unchanging circle, whether above or below them, 'it is not ours to say,' yet completely apart from them, into which they would rejoice to find entrance, and from which they would be glad to receive emigrants.

Whatever may be the accomplishments necessary to render one capable of reaching the highest platform of social eminence, and it is not easy to define clearly what they are, there is one thing, and one alone, which will enable any man to *retain* his station there; and that is, GOOD BREEDING. Without it, we believe that literature, wealth, and even blood, will be unsuccessful. By it, if it co-exist with a certain capacity of affording pleasure by conversation, any one, we imagine, could frequent the very best society in every city of America, and *perhaps the very best alone.* To obtain, then, the

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manners of a gentleman is a matter of no small importance.

We do not pretend that a man will be metamorphosed into a gentleman by reading this book, or any other book. Refined manners are like refined style which Cicero compares to the colour of the cheeks, which is not acquired by sudden or violent exposure to heat, but by continual walking in the sun. Good manners can certainly only be acquired by much usage in good company. But there are a number of little forms, imperiously enacted by custom, which may be taught in this manner, and the conscious ignorance of which often prevents persons from going into company at all.

These forms may be abundantly absurd, but still they *must* be attended to; for one half the world does and always will observe them, and the other half is at a great disadvantage if it does not. Intercourse is constantly taking place, and an awkward man of letters, in the society of a polished man of the world, is like a strong man contending with a skilful fencer. Mr. Addison says, that he once saw the ablest mathematician in the kingdom utterly embarrassed, from not knowing whether he ought to stand or sit when my lord duke drank his health.

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Some of the many errors which are liable to be committed through ignorance of usage, are pleasantly pointed out in the following story, which is related by a French writer.

The Abb, Cosson, professor in the *College Mazarin,* thoroughly accomplished in the art of teaching, saturated with Greek, Latin, and literature, considered himself a perfect well of science: he had no conception that a man who knew all Persius and Horace by heart could possibly commit an error—above all, an error at table. But it was not long before he discovered his mistake. One day, after dining with the Abb, de Radonvillers at Versailles, in company with several courtiers and marshals of France, he was boasting of the rare acquaintance with etiquette and custom which he had exhibited at dinner. The Abb, Delille, who heard this eulogy upon his own conduct, interrupted his harangue, by offering to wager that he had committed at least a hundred improprieties at the table. "How is it possible!" exclaimed Cosson. "I did exactly like the rest of the company."

"What absurdity!" said the other. "You did a thousand things which no one else did. First, when you sat down at the table, what did you do with your napkin?" "My napkin? Why just what every body else did with theirs. I unfolded it entire)y, and fastened it to my buttonhole."

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"Well, my dear friend," said Delille, "you were the only one that did *that,* at all events. No one hangs up his napkin in that style; they are contented with placing it on their knees. And what did you, do when you took your soup?" "Like the others, I believe. I took my spoon in one hand, and my fork in the other—" "Your fork! Who ever eat soup with a fork?—But to proceed; after your soup, what did you eat?" "A fresh egg." "And what did you do with the shell?" "Handed it to the servant who stood behind my chair." "With out breaking it?" "Without breaking it, of course." "Well, my dear Abb,, nobody ever eats an egg without breaking the shell. And after your egg—?" "I asked the Abb, Radonvillers to send me a piece of the hen near him." "Bless my soul! a piece of the *hen*? You never speak of hens excepting in the barn-yard. You should have asked for fowl or chicken. But you say nothing of your mode of drinking." "Like all the rest, I asked for *claret* and *champagne.*" "Let me inform you, then, that persons always ask for *claret wine* and *champagne wine.* But, tell me, how did you eat your bread?" "Surely I did that properly. I cut it with my knife, in the most regular manner possible." "Bread should always be broken, not cut. But the coffee, how did you manage it?" "It was rather too hot, and I poured a little of it into my saucer." "Well, you committed here the greatest fault of all. You should never pour your coffee into the saucer, but always drink

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it from the cup." The poor Abb, was confounded. He felt that though one might be master of the seven sciences, yet that there was another species of knowledge which, if less dignified, was equally important.

This occurred many years ago, but there is not one of the observances neglected by the Abb, Cosson, which is not enforced with equal rigidness in the present day.

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Chapter I - Good Breeding

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The formalities of refined society were at first established for the purpose of facilitating the intercourse of persons of the same standing, and increasing the happiness of all to whom they apply. They are now kept up, both to assist the convenience of intercourse and to prevent too great familiarity. If they are carried too far, and escape from the control of good sense, they become impediments to enjoyment. Among the Chinese they serve only the purpose of annoying to an incalculable degree. "The government," says De Marcy, in writing of China, "constantly applies itself to preserve, not only in the court and among the great, but among the people themselves, a constant habit of civility and courtesy. The Chinese have an infinity of books upon such subjects; one of these treatises contains more than three thousand articles.— Everything is pointed out with the most minute detail; the manner of saluting, of visiting, of making presents, of writing letters, of eating, etc.: and these customs have the force of laws—no one can

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dispense with them. There is a special tribunal at Peking, of which it is one of the chief duties, to ensure the observance of these civil ordinances?"

One would think that one was here reading an account of the capital of France. It depends, then, upon the spirit in which these forms are observed, whether their result shall be beneficial or not. The French and the Chinese are the most formal of all the nations. Yet the one is the stiffest and most distant; the other, the easiest and most social.

"We may define politeness," says La Bruy,re, "though we cannot tell where to fix it in practice. It observes received usages and customs, is bound to times and places, and is not the same thing in the two sexes or in different conditions. Wit alone cannot obtain it: it is acquired and brought to perfection by emulation. Some dispositions alone are susceptible of politeness, as others are only capable of great talents or solid virtues. It is true politeness puts merit forward, and renders it agreeable, and a man must have eminent qualifications to support himself without it." Perhaps even the greatest merit cannot successfully straggle against unfortunate and disagreeable manners. Lord Chesterfield says that the Duke of Marlborough owed his first promotions to the suavity of his manners, and that without it he could not

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have risen.

La Bruy,re has elsewhere given this happy definition of politeness, the other passage being rather a description of it. "Politeness seems to be a certain care, by the manner of our words and actions, to make others pleased with us and themselves."

We must here stop to point out an error which is often committed both in practice and opinion, and which consists in confounding together the gentleman and the man of fashion. No two characters can be more distinct than these. Good sense and self-respect are the foundations of the one—notoriety and influence the objects of the other. Men of fashion are to be seen everywhere: a pure and mere gentleman is the rarest thing alive. Brummel was a man of fashion; but it would be a perversion of terms to apply to him "a very expressive word in our language,—a word, denoting an assemblage of many real virtues and of many qualities approaching to virtues, and an union of manners at once pleasing and commanding respect,— the word gentleman."[1] The requisites to compose this last character are natural ease of manner, and an acquaintance with the "outward habit of encounter"—dignity and self- possession—a respect for all the decencies of life, and perfect freedom from all

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affectation. Dr. Johnson's bearing during his interview with the king showed him to be a thorough gentleman, and demonstrates how rare and elevated that character is. When his majesty expressed in the language of compliment his high opinion of Johnson's merits, the latter bowed in silence. If Chesterfield could have retained sufficient presence of mind to have done the same on such an occasion, he would have applauded himself to the end of his days. So delicate is the nature of those qualities that constitute a gentleman, that there is but one exhibition of this description of persons in all the literary and dramatic fictions from Shakespeare downward. Scott has not attempted it. Bulwer, in "Pelham," has shot wide of the mark. It was reserved for the author of two very singular productions, "Sydenham" and its continuation "Alice Paulet"—works of extraordinary merits and extraordinary faults—to portray this character completely, in the person of Mr. Paulet

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Chapter II - Dress

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First impressions are apt to be permanent; it is therefore of importance that they should be favourable. The dress of an individual is that circumstance from which you first form your opinion of him. It is even more prominent than manner, It is indeed the only thing which is remarked in a casual encounter, or during the first interview. It, therefore, should be the first care.

What style is to our thoughts, dress is to our persons. It may supply the place of more solid qualities, and without it the most solid are of little avail. Numbers have owed their elevation to their attention to the toilet. Place, fortune, marriage have all been lost by neglecting it. A man need not mingle long with the world to find occasion to exclaim with Sedaine, "Ah! mon habit, que je vous remercie!" In spite of the proverb, the dress often *does* make the monk.

Your dress should always be consistent with your age

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and your natural exterior. That which looks outr, on one man, will be agreeable on another. As success in this respect depends almost entirely upon particular circumstances and personal peculiarities, it is impossible to give general directions of much importance. We can only point out the field for study and research; it belongs to each one's own genius and industry to deduce the results. However ugly you may be, rest assured that there is some style of habiliment which will make you passable.

If, for example, you have a stain upon your cheek which rivals in brilliancy the best Chateau-Margout; or, are afflicted with a nose whose lustre dims the ruby, you may employ such hues of dress, that the eye, instead of being shocked by the strangeness of the defect, will be charmed by the graceful harmony of the colours. Every one cannot indeed be an Adonis, but it is his own fault if he is an Esop.

If you have bad, squinting eyes, which have lost their lashes and are bordered with red, you should wear spectacles. If the defect be great, your glasses should be coloured. In such cases emulate the sky rather than the sea: green spectacles are an abomination, fitted only for students in divinity,— blue ones are respectable and even *distingue.*

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Almost every defect of face may be concealed by a judicious use and arrangement of hair. Take care, however, that your hair be not of one colour and your whiskers of another; and let your wig be large enough to cover the *whole* of your red or white hair.

It is evident, therefore, that though a man may be ugly, there is no necessity for his being shocking. Would that all men were convinced of this! I verily believe that if Mr. — in his walking-dress, and Mr. — in his evening costume were to meet alone, in some solitary place, where there was nothing to divert their attention from one another, they would expire of mutual hideousness.

If you have any defect, so striking and so ridiculous as to procure you a *nickname* then indeed there is but one remedy,—renounce society.

In the morning, before eleven o'clock even if you go out, you should not be dressed. You would be stamped a *parvenu* if you were seen in anything better than a reputable old frock coat. If you remain at home, and are a bachelor, it is permitted to receive visitors in a morning gown. In summer, calico; in winter, figured cloth, faced with fur. At dinner, a coat, of course, is indispensable.

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The effect of a frock coat is to conceal the height. If, therefore, you are beneath the ordinary statue, or much above it, you should affect frock coats on all occasions that etiquette permits.

Before going to a ball or party it is not sufficient that you consult your mirror twenty times. You must be personally inspected by your servant or a friend. Through defect of this, I once saw a gentleman enter a ball-room, attired with scrupulous elegance, but with one of his suspenders curling in graceful festoons about his feet. His glass could not show what was behind.

If you are about to present yourself in a company composed only of men, you may wear boots. If there be but one lady present, pumps and silk-stockings are indispensable.

There is a common proverb which says, that if a man be well dressed as to head and feet, he may present himself everywhere. The assertion is as false as Mr. Kemble's voice. Happy indeed if it were necessary to perfect only the extremities. The coat, the waistcoat, the gloves, and, above all, the cravat, must be alike ignorant of blemish.

Upon the subject of the cravat—(for heaven's sake and Brummel's, never appear in a stock after twelve o'clock)

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—We cannot at present say anything. If we were to say anything, we could not be content without saying all, and to say all would require a folio. A book has been published upon the subject, entitled "The Cravat considered in its moral, literary, political, military, and religious attributes." This and a clever, though less profound, treatise on "The art of tying the Cravat," are as indispensable to a gentleman as an ice at twelve o'clock.

When we speak of excellence in dress we do not mean richness of clothing, nor manifested elaboration. Faultless propriety, perfect harmony, and a refined simplicity,—these are the charms which fascinate here.

It is as great a sin to be finical in dress as to be negligent.

Upon this subject the ladies are the only infallible oracles. Apart from the perfection to which they must of necessity arrive, from devoting their entire existence to such considerations, they seem to be endued with an inexpressible tact, a sort of sixth sense, which reveals intuitively the proper distinctions. That your dress is approved by a man is nothing;—you cannot enjoy the high satisfaction of being perfectly comme il faut, until your performance has received the seal of a woman's approbation.

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If the benefits to be derived from cultivating your exterior do not appear sufficiently powerful to induce attention, the inconveniences arising from too great disregard may perhaps prevail. Sir Matthew Hale, in the earlier part of his life, dressed so badly that he was once seized by the press-gang. Not long since, as I entered the hall of a public hotel, I saw a person so villainously habited, that supposing him to be one of the servants, I desired him to take my luggage upstairs, and was on the point of offering him a shilling, when I discovered that I was addressing the Honorable Mr. ——, one of the most eminent American statesmen.

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Chapter III - Salutations

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The salutation, says a French writer, is the touchstone of good breeding. According to circumstances, it should be respectful, cordial, civil, affectionate or familiar:—an inclination of the head, a gesture with the hand, the touching or doffing of the hat.

If you remove your hat you need not at the same time bend the dorsal vertebr' of your body, unless you wish to be very reverential, as in saluting a bishop.

It is a mark of high breeding not to speak to a lady in the street, until you perceive that she has noticed you by an inclination of the head.

Some ladies *courtesy* in the street, a movement not gracefully consistent with locomotion. They should always *bow*.

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If an individual of the lowest rank, or without any rank at all, takes off his hat to you, you should do the same in return. A bow, says La Fontaine, is a note drawn at sight. If you acknowledge it, you must pay the full amount. The two best-bred men in England, Charles the Second and George the Fourth, never failed to take off their hats to the meanest of their subjects.

Avoid condescending bows to your friends and equals. If you meet a rich parvenu, whose consequence you wish to reprove, you may salute him in a very patronizing manner: or else, in acknowledging his bow, look somewhat surprised and say, "Mister—eh—eh?"

If you have remarkably fine teeth, you may smile affectionately upon the bowee, without speaking.

In passing ladies of rank, whom you meet in society, bow, but do not speak.

If you have anything to say to any one in the street, especially a lady, however intimate you may be, do not stop the person, but turn round and walk in company; you can take leave at the end of the street.

If there is any one of your acquaintance, with whom you have a difference, do not avoid looking at him, unless

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from the nature of things the quarrel is necessarily for life. It is almost always better to bow with cold civility, though without speaking.

As a general rule never *cut* any one in the street. Even political and steamboat acquaintances should be noticed by the slightest movement in the world. If they presume to converse with you, or stop you to introduce their companion, it is then time to use your eye-glass, and say, "I never knew you."

If you address a lady in the open air, you remain uncovered until she has desired you *twice* to put on your hat. In general, if you are in any place where *etiquette* requires you to remain uncovered or standing, and a lady, or one much your superior, requests you to be covered or to sit, you may how off the command. If it is repeated, you should comply. You thereby pay the person a marked, but delicate, compliment, by allowing their will to be superior to the general obligations of etiquette.

When two Americans, who "have not been introduced," meet in some public place, as in a theatre, a stagecoach, or a steamboat, they will sit for an hour staring in one another's faces, but without a word of conversation. This form of unpoliteness has been adopted from the English, and it is as little worthy of imitation as the form of their

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government. Good sense and convenience are the foundations of good breeding; and it is assuredly vastly more reasonable and more agreeable to enjoy a passing gratification, when no sequent evil is to be apprehended, than to be rendered uncomfortable by an ill-founded pride. It is therefore better to carry on an easy and civil conversation. A snuff-box, or some polite accommodation rendered, may serve for an opening. Talk only about generalities,—the play, the roads, the weather. Avoid speaking of persons or politics, for, if the individual is of the opposite party to yourself, you will be engaged in a controversy: if he holds the same opinions, you will be overwhelmed with a flood of vulgar intelligence, which may soil your mind. Be reservedly civil while the colloquy lasts, and let the acquaintance cease with the occasion.

When you are introduced to a gentleman do not give your hand, but merely bow with politeness: and if you have requested the introduction, or know the person by reputation, you may make a speech. I am aware that high authority might easily be found in this country to sanction the custom of giving the hand upon a first meeting, but it is undoubtedly a solecism in manners. The habit has been adopted by us, with some improvement for the worse, from France. When two Frenchmen are presented to one another, each *presses* the

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other's hand with delicate affection. The English, however, never do so: and the practice, if abstractly correct, is altogether inconsistent with the caution of manner which is characteristic of their nation and our own. If we are to follow the French, in shaking hands with one whom we have never before seen, we should certainly imitate them also in kissing our *intimate* male acquaintances. If, however, you ought only to bow to a new acquaintance, you surely should do more to old ones. If you meet an intimate friend fifty times in a morning, give your hand every time,—an observance of propriety, which, though worthy of universal adoption, is in this country only followed by the purists in politeness. The requisitions of etiquette, if they should be obeyed at all, should be obeyed fully. This decent formality prevents acquaintance from being too distant, while, at the same time, it preserves the "familiar" from becoming "vulgar." They may be little things, but

"These little things are great to little men."

Goldsmith.

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Chapter IV - The Drawing-Room Company Conversation

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The grand object for which a gentleman exists, is to excel in company. Conversation is the mean of his distinction,—the drawing-room the scene of his glory.

When you enter a drawing-room, where there is a ball or a party, you salute the lady of the house before speaking to any one else. Even your most intimate friends are enveloped in an opaque atmosphere until you have made your bow to your entertainer. We must take occasion here to obelize a custom which prevails too generally in this country. The company enter the back door of the back parlour, and the mistress of the house is seated at the other extremity of the front parlour. It is therefore necessary to traverse the length of two rooms in order to reach her. A voyage of this kind is by no means an easy undertaking, when there are Circes and Calypsos assailing one on every side; and when one has reached

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the conclusion, one cannot perhaps distinguish the object of one's search at a *coup d'oeil.* It would be in every point of view more appropriate if the lady were to stand directly opposite to the door of the back parlour. Such is the custom in the best companies abroad. Upon a single gentleman entering at a late hour, it is not so obligatory to speak first to the mistress of the ceremonies. He may be allowed to converge his way up to her. When you leave a room before the others, go without speaking to any one, and, if possible, unseen.

Never permit the sanctity of the drawing-room to be violated by a boot.

Fashionable society is divided into *sets,* in all of which there is some peculiarity of manner, or some dominant tone of feeling. It is necessary to study these peculiarities before entering the circle.

In each of these sets there is generally some *gentleman,* who rules, and gives it its character, or, rather, who is not ruler, but the first and most favoured subject, and the prime minister of the ladies' will. Him you must endeavour to imitate, taking care not to imitate him so well as to excel him. To differ in manner or opinion from him is to render yourself unfit for that circle. To speak disrespectfully of him is to insult personally every lady

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who composes it.

In company, though none are "free," yet all are "equal." All therefore whom you meet, should be treated with equal respect, although interest may dictate toward each different degrees of attention. It is disrespectful to the inviter to shun any of her guests. Those whom she has honoured by asking to her house, you should sanction by admitting to your acquaintance.

If you meet any one whom you have never heard of before at the table of a gentleman, or in the drawing-room of a lady, you may converse with him with entire propriety. The form of "introduction" is nothing more than a statement by a mutual friend that two gentlemen are by rank and manners fit acquaintances for one another. All this may be presumed from the fact, that both meet at a respectable house. This is the theory of the matter. Custom, however, requires that you should take the earliest opportunity afterwards to be regularly presented to such an one.

Men of all sorts of occupations meet in society. As they go there to unbend their minds and escape from the fetters of business, you should never, in an evening, speak to a man about his professions. Do not talk of politics with a journalist, of fevers to a physician, of

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stocks to a broker,- -nor, unless you wish to enrage him to the utmost, of education to a collegian. The error which is here condemned is often committed from mere good nature and a desire to be affable. But it betrays to a gentleman, ignorance of the world—to a philosopher, ignorance of human nature. The one considers that "Tous les hommes sont ,gaux devant la politesse:" the other remembers that though it may be agreeable to be patronised and assisted, yet it is still more agreeable to be treated as if you needed no patronage, and were above assistance.

Sir Joshua Reynolds once received from two noblemen invitations to visit them on Sunday morning. The first, whom he waited upon, welcomed him with the most obsequious condescension, treated him with all the attention in the world, professed that he was so desirous of seeing him, that he had mentioned Sunday as the time for his visit, supposing him to be too much engaged during the week, to spare time enough for the purpose, concluded his compliments by an eulogy on painting, and smiled him affectionately to the door. Sir Joshua left him, to call upon the other. That one received him with respectful civility, and behaved to him as he would have behaved to an equal in the peerage:—said nothing about Raphael nor Correggio, but conversed with ease about literature and men. This nobleman was the Earl of

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Chesterfield. Sir Joshua felt, that though the one had said that he respected him, the other had proved that he did, and went away from this one gratified rather than from the first. Reader, there is wisdom in this anecdote. Mark, learn, and inwardly digest it: and let this be the moral which you deduce,—that there is distinction in society, but that there are no distinctions.

The great business in company is conversation. It should be studied as art. Style in conversation is as important, and as capable of cultivation as style in writing. The manner of saying things is what gives them their value.

The most important requisite for succeeding here, is constant and unfaltering attention. That which Churchill has noted as the greatest virtue on the stage, is also the most necessary in company,—to be "always attentive to the business of the scene." Your understanding should, like your person, be armed at all points. Never go into society with your mind *en deshabille.* It is fatal to success to be all absent or *distrait.* The secret of conversation has been said to consist in building upon the remark of your companion. Men of the strongest minds, who have solitary habits and bookish dispositions, rarely excel in sprightly colloquy, because they seize upon the *thing* itself,—the subject abstractly,- - instead of attending to the *language* of other speakers,

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and do not cultivate *verbal* pleasantries and refinements. He who does otherwise gains a reputation for quickness, and pleases by showing that he has regarded the observation of others.

It is an error to suppose that conversation consists in talking. A more important thing is to listen discreetly. Mirabeau said, that to succeed in the world, it is necessary to submit to be taught many things which you understand, by persons who know nothing about them. Flattery is the smoothest path to success; and the most refined and gratifying compliment you can pay, is to listen. "The wit of conversation consists more in finding it in others," says La Bruy,re, "than in showing a great deal yourself: he who goes from your conversation pleased with himself and his own wit, is perfectly well pleased with you. Most men had rather please than admire you, and seek less to be instructed,—nay, delighted,—than to be approved and applauded. The most delicate pleasure is to please another."

It is certainly proper enough to convince others of your merits. But the highest idea which you can give a man of your own penetration, is to be thoroughly impressed with his.

Patience is a social engine, as well as a Christian virtue.

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To listen, to wait, and to he wearied are the certain elements of good fortune.

If there be any foreigner present at a dinner party, or small evening party, who does not understand the language which is spoken, good breeding requires that the conversation should be carried on entirely in his language. Even among your most intimate friends, never address any one in a language not understood by all the others. It is as bad as whispering.

Never speak to any one in company about a private affair which is not understood by others, as asking how *tha*t matter is coming on, &c. In so doing you indicate your opinion that the rest are *de trop.* If you wish to make any such inquiries, always explain to others the business about which you inquire, if the subject admit of it.

If upon the entrance of a visitor you continue a conversation begun before, you should always explain the subject to the new-comer.

If there is any one in the company whom you do not know, be careful how you let off any epigrams or pleasant little sarcasms. You might be very witty upon halters to a man whose father had been hanged. The first requisite for successful conversation is to know your

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company well.

We have spoken above of the necessity of relinquishing the prerogative of our race, and being contented with recipient silence. There is another precept of a kindred nature to be observed, namely, not to talk too well when you do talk. You do not raise yourself much in the opinion of another, if at the same time that you amuse him, you wound him in the nicest point,—his self-love. Besides irritating vanity, a constant flow of wit is excessively fatiguing to the listeners. A witty man is an agreeable acquaintance, but a tiresome friend. "The wit of the company, next to the butt of the company," says Mrs. Montagu, "is the meanest person in it. The great duty of conversation is to follow suit, as you do at whist: if the eldest hand plays the deuce of diamonds, let not his next neighbour dash down the king of hearts, because his hand is full of honours. I do not love to see a man of wit win all the tricks in conversation."

In addressing any one, always look at him; and if there are several present, you will please more by directing some portion of your conversation, as an anecdote or statement, to each one individually in turn. This was the great secret of Sheridan's charming manner. His bon-mots were not numerous.

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Never ask a question under any circumstances. In the first place it is too proud; in the second place, it may be very inconvenient or very awkward to give a reply. A lady lately inquired of what branch of medical practice a certain gentleman was professor. He held the chair of *midwifery*!

It is indispensable for conversation to be well acquainted with the current news and the historical events of the last few years. It is not convenient to be quite so far behind the rest of the world in such matters, as the Courier des Etats- Unis. That sapient journal lately announced the dethronement of Charles X. We may expect soon to hear of the accession of Louis Philippe.

In society never quote. If you get entangled in a dispute with some learned blockhead, you may silence him with a few extemporary quotations. Select the author for whom he has the greatest admiration, and give him a passage in the style of that writer, which most pointedly condemns the opinion he supports. If it does not convince him, he will be so much stunned with amazement that you can make your escape, and avoid the unpleasant necessity of knocking him down.

The ordinary weapons which one employs in social encounter, are, whether dignified or not, always at least

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honourable. There are some, however, who habitually prefer to bribe the judge, rather than strengthen their cause. The instrument of such is flattery. There are, indeed, cases in which a man of honour may use the same weapon; as there are cases in which a poisoned sword may be employed for self-defence.

Flattery prevails over all, always, and in all places; it conquers the conqueror of Dan"e: few are beneath it, none above it: the court, the camp, the church, are the scenes of its victories, and all mankind the subjects of its triumphs. It will be acknowledged, then, that a man possesses no very contemptible power who can flatter skillfully.

The power of flattery may be derived from several sources. It may be, that the person flattered, finding himself gratified, and conscious that it is to the flatterer that he is indebted for this gratification, feels an obligation to him, without inquiring the reason; or it may be, that imagining ourselves to stand high in the good opinion of the one that praises us, We comply with what he desires, rather than forfeit that esteem: or, finally, flattery may be only a marked politeness, and we submit ourselves to the control of the flatterer rather than be guilty of the rudeness of opposing him.

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Flattery never should be direct. It should not be stated, but inferred. It is better acted than uttered. Flattery should seem to be the unwitting and even unwilling expression of genuine admiration. Some very weak persons do not require that expressions of praise and esteem toward them should be sincere. They are pleased with the incense, although they perceive whence it arises: they are pleased that they are of importance enough to have their favour courted. But in most eases it is necessary that the flattery should appear to be the honest offspring of the feelings. *Such* flattery *must* succeed; for, it is founded upon a principle in our nature which is as deep as life; namely, that we always love those who we think love us.

It is sometimes flattery to accept praises.

Never flatter one person in the presence of another.

Never commend a lady's musical skill to another lady who herself plays.

It has often, however, a good effect to praise one man to his particular friend, if it be for something to which that friend has himself no pretensions.

It is an error to imagine that men are less intoxicated

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with flattery than women. The only difference is that esteem must be expressed to women, but proved to men.

Flattery is of course efficacious to obtain positive benefits. It is of, more constant use, however, for purposes of defence. You conquer an attack of rudeness by courtesy: you avert an attack of accusation by flattery. Every:one remembers the anecdote of Dr. Johnson and Mr. Ewing. "Prince," said Napoleon to Talleyrand, "they tell me that you sometimes speculate improperly in the funds. "They do me wrong then," said Talleyrand. "But how did you acquire so much money!" "I bought stock the day before you were proclaimed First Consul," replied the ex-bishop, "and I sold it the day after."

Compliments are light skirmishes in the war of flattery, for the purpose of obtaining an occasional object. They are little false coins that you receive with one hand and pay away with the other. To flatter requires a profound knowledge of human nature and of the character of your subject; to compliment skillfully, it is sufficient that you are a pupil of Spurzheim.

It is a common practice with men to abstain from grave conversation with women. And the habit is in general judicious. If the woman is young, gay and trifling, talk to her only of the latest fashions, the gossip of the day, etc.

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But this in other cases is not to be done. Most women who are a little old, particularly married women — and even some who are young — wish to obtain a reputation for intellect and an acquaintance With science. You therefore pay them a real compliment, and gratify their self-love, by conversing occasionally upon grave matters, which they do not understand, and do not really relish. You may interrupt a discussion on the beauty of a dahlia, by observing that as you know that they take an interest in such things you mention the discovery of a new method of analyzing curves of double curvature. Men who talk only of trifles will rarely be popular with women past twenty-five.

Talk to a mother about her children. Women are never tired of hearing of themselves and their children.

If you go to a house where there are children you should take especial care to conciliate their good will by a little manly *tete-a-tete,* otherwise you may get a ball against your skins, or be tumbled from a three-legged chair.

To be able to converse with women you must study their vocabulary. You would make a great mistake in interpreting *never, forever,* as they are explained in Johnson.

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Do not be for ever telling a woman that she is handsome, witty, etc. She knows that a vast deal better than you do.

Do not allow your love for one woman to prevent your paying attention to others. The object of your love is the only one who ought to perceive it.

A little pride, which reminds you what is due to yourself, and a little good nature, which suggests what is due to others, are the pre-requisites for the moral constitution of a gentleman.

Too much vivacity and too much inertness are both fatal to politeness. By the former we are hurried too far, by the latter we are kept too much back.

Nil admirari, the precept of stoicism, is the precept for conduct among gentlemen. All excitement must be studiously avoided. When you are with ladies the case is different. Among them, wonder, astonishment, ecstacy, and enthusiasm, are necessary in order to be believed.

Never dispute in the presence of other persons. If a man states an opinion which you cannot adopt, say nothing. If he states a fact which is of little importance, you may carelessly assent. When you differ let it be indirectly; rather a want of assent than actual dissent.

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If you wish to inquire about anything, do not do it by asking a question; but introduce the subject, and give the person an opportunity of saying as much as he finds it agreeable to impart. Do not even say, "How is your brother to-day?" but "I hope your brother is quite well."

Never ask a lady a question about anything whatever.

It is a point of courtly etiquette which is observed rigorously by every one who draws nigh, that a question must never be put to a king.

Never ask a question about the price of a thing. This horrible error is often committed by a *nouveau riche.*

If you have accepted an invitation to a party never fail to keep your promise. It is cruel to the lady of the house to accept, and then send an apology at the last moment. Especially do not break your word on account of bad weather. You may be certain that many others will, and the inciter will be mortified by the paucity of her guests. A cloak and a carriage will secure you from all inconvenience, and you will be conferring a real benefit.

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Chapter V - The Entrance into Society

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Women, particularly women a little on the decline, are those who make the reputation of a young man. When the lustre of their distinction begins to fade, a slight feeling of less wonted leisure, perhaps a little spite, makes them observe attentively those who surround them. Eager to gain new admirers, they encourage the first steps of a *debutant* in the career of society, and exert themselves to fit him to do honour to their patronage.

A young man, therefore, in entering the world, cannot be too attentive to conciliate the goodwill of women. Their approbation and support will serve him instead of a thousand good qualities. Their judgment dispenses with fortune, talent, and even intelligence. "Les hommes font les lois: les femmes font les reputations."

The desire of pleasing is, of course, the basis of social

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connexion. Persons who enter society with the intention of producing an effect, and of being distinguished, however clever they may be, are never agreeable. They are always tiresome, and often ridiculous. Persons, who enter life with such pretensions, have no opportunity for improving themselves and profiting by experience. They are not in a proper state to *observe*: indeed, they look only for the effect which they produce, and with that they are not often gratified. They thrust themselves into all conversations, indulge in continual anecdotes, which are varied only by dull disquisitions, listen to others with impatience and heedlessness, and are angry that they seem to be attending to themselves. Such men go through scenes of pleasure, enjoying nothing. They are equally disagreeable to themselves and others. Young men should, therefore, content themselves with being natural. Let them present themselves with a modest assurance: let them observe, hear, and examine, and before long they will rival their models.

The conversation of those women who are not the most lavishly supplied with personal beauty, will be of the most advantage to the young aspirant. Such persons have cultivated their manners and conversation more than those who can rely upon their natural endowments. The absence of pride and pretension has improved their good nature and their affability. They are not too much

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occupied in contemplating their own charms, to be disposed to indulge in gentle criticism on others. One acquires from them an elegance in one's manners as well as one's expressions. Their kindness pardons every error, and to instruct or reprove, their acts are so delicate that the lesson which they give, always without offending, is sure to be profitable, though it may be often unperceived.

Women observe all the delicacies of propriety in manners, and all the shades of impropriety, much better than men; not only because they attend to them earlier and longer, but because their perceptions are more refined than those of the other sex, who are habitually employed about greater things. Women divine, rather than arrive at, proper conclusions.

The whims and caprices of women in society should of course be tolerated by men, who themselves require toleration for greater inconveniences. But this must not be carried too far. There are certain limits to empire which, if they themselves forget, should be pointed out to them with delicacy and politeness. You should be the slave of women, but not of all their fancies.

Compliment is the language of intercourse from men to women. But be careful to avoid elaborate and common-place forms of gallant speech. Do not strive to make

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those long eulogies on a woman, which have the regularity and nice dependency of a proposition in Euclid, and might be fittingly concluded by Q. E. D. Do not be always undervaluing her rival in a woman's presence, nor mistaking a woman's daughter for her sister. These antiquated and exploded attempts denote a person who has learned the world more from books than men.

The quality which a young man should most affect in intercourse with gentlemen, is a decent modesty: but he must avoid all bashfulness or timidity. His flights must not go too far; but, so far as they go, let them be marked by perfect assurance.

Among persons who are much your seniors behave with the utmost respectful deference. As they find themselves sliding out of importance they may be easily conciliated by a little respect.

By far the most important thing to be attended to, is ease of manner. Grace may be added afterwards, or be omitted altogether: it is of much less moment than is commonly believed. Perfect propriety and entire ease are sufficient qualifications for standing in society, and abundant prerequisites for distinction.

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There is the most delicate shade of difference between civility and intrusiveness, familiarity and common-place, pleasantry and sharpness, the natural and the rude, gaiety and carelessness; hence the inconveniences of society, and the errors of its members. To define well in conduct these distinctions, is the great art of a man of the world. It is easy to know what to do; the difficulty is to know what to avoid.

Long usage—a sort of moral magnetism, a tact acquired by frequent and long associating with others—alone give those qualities which keep one always from error, and entitle him to the name of a thorough gentleman.

A young man upon first entering into society should select those persons who are most celebrated for the propriety and elegance of their manners. He should frequent their company and imitate their conduct. There is a disposition inherent, in all, which has been noticed by Horace and by Dr. Johnson, to imitate faults, because they are more readily observed and more easily followed. There are, also, many foibles of manner and many refinements of affectation, which sit agreeably upon one man, which if adopted by another would become unpleasant. There are even some excellences of deportment which would not suit another whose character is different. For successful imitation in

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anything, good sense is indispensable. It is requisite correctly to appreciate the natural differences between your model and yourself, and to introduce such modifications in the copy as may be consistent with it.

Let not any man imagine, that he shall easily acquire these qualities which will constitute him a gentleman. It is necessary not only to exert the highest degree of art, but to attain also that higher accomplishment of concealing art. The serene and elevated dignity which mark that character, are the result of untiring and arduous effort. After the sculpture has attained the shape of propriety, it remains to smooth off all the marks of the chisel. "A gentleman," says a celebrated French author, "is one who has reflected deeply upon all the obligations which belong to his station, and who has applied himself ardently to fulfil them with grace."

Polite without importunity, gallant without being offensive, attentive to the comfort of all; employing a well-regulated kindness, witty at the proper times, discreet, indulgent, generous, he exercises, in his sphere, a high degree of moral authority; he it is, and he alone, that one should imitate.

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Chapter VI - Letters

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Always remember that the terms of compliment at the close of a letter—"I have the honour to be your very obedient servant," etc. are merely forms—"signifying nothing." Do not therefore avoid them on account of pride, or a dislike to the person addressed. Do not presume, as some do, to found expectations of favour or promotion from great men who profess themselves your obliged servant.

In writing a letter of business it is extremely vulgar to use satin or glazed gold-edged paper. Always employ, on such occasions, plain American paper. Place the date at the top of the page, and if you please, the name of the person at the top also, just above the 'Sir;' though this last is indifferent.

In letters to gentlemen always place the date at the end of the letter, below his name. Use the best paper, but not figured, and never fail to enclose it in an envelope.

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Attention to these matters is indispensable.

To a person whom you do not know well, say Sir, not 'Dear Sir.' It formerly was usual in writing to a distinguished man to employ the form 'Respected Sir,' or something of the kind. This is now out of fashion.

There are a great many forms observed by the French in their letters, which are necessary to be known before addressing one of that nation. You will find them in their books upon such subjects, or learn them from your French master. One custom of theirs is worthy of adoption among us: to proportion the distance between the 'Sir' and the first line of the letter, to the rank of the person to whom you write. Among the French to neglect attending to this would give mortal offence. It obtains also in other European nations. When the Duke of Buckingham was at the court of Spain, some letters passed between the Spanish minister Olivez and himself, —the two proudest men on earth. The Spaniard wrote a letter to the Englishman, and put the 'Monsieur' on a line with the beginning of his letter. The other, in his reply, placed the 'Monsieur' a little below it.

A note of invitation or reply is always to be enclosed in an envelope.

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Wafers are now entirely exploded. A letter of business is sealed with red wax, and marked with some common stamp. Letters to gentlemen demand red wax sealed with your arms. In notes to ladies employ coloured wax, but not perfumed.

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Chapter VII - Visits

*

Of visits there are various sorts; visits of congratulation, visits of condolence, visits of ceremony, visits of friendship. To each belong different customs.

A visit and an insult must be always returned.

Visits of ceremony should be very short. Go at some time when business demands the employment of every moment. In visits of friendship adopt a different course.

If you call to see an acquaintance at lodgings, and cannot find any one to announce you, you knock very lightly at the door, and wait some time before entering. If you are in too great a hurry, you might find the person drawing off a night- cap.

Respectable visitors should be received and treated with the utmost courtesy. But if a tiresome fellow, after

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wearying all his friends, becomes weary of himself, and arrives to bestow his tediousness upon you, pull out your watch with restlessness, talk about your great occupations and the value of time. Politeness is one thing; to be made a convenience of is another.

The style of your conversation should always be in keeping with the character of the visit. You must not talk about literature in a visit of condolence, nor about political economy in a visit of ceremony.

When a lady visits you, upon her retiring, you offer her your arm, and conduct her to her carriage. If you are visiting at the same time with another lady, you should take leave at the same time, and hand her into her carriage.

After a hall, a dinner, or a concert, you visit during the week.

Pay the first visit to a friend just returned from a voyage.

Annual visits are paid to persons with whom you have a cool acquaintance, They visit you in the autumn, you return a card in the spring.

In paying a visit under ordinary circumstances, you leave

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a single card. If there be residing in the family, a married daughter, an unmarried sister, a transient guest, or any person in a distinct situation from the mistress of the house, you leave two cards, one for each party. If you are acquainted with only one member of a family, as the husband, or the wife, and you wish to indicate that your visit is to both, you leave two cards. Ladies have a fashion of pinching down one corner of a card to denote that the visit is to only one of two parties in a house, and two corners, or one side of the card, when the visit is to both; but this is a transient mode, and of dubious respectability.

If, in paying a morning visit, you are not recognized when you enter, mention your name immediately. If you call to visit one member, and you find others only in the parlour, introduce yourself to them. Much awkwardness may occur through defect of attention to this point.

When a gentleman is about to be married, he sends cards, a day or two before the event, to all whom he is in the habit of visiting. These visits are never paid in person, but the cards sent by a servant, at any hour in the morning; or the gentleman goes in a carriage, and sends them in. After marriage, some day is appointed and made known to all, as the day on which he receives company. His friends then all call upon him. Would that this also

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were performed by cards!

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Chapter VIII - Appointments and Punctuality

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When you make an appointment, always be exact in observing it. In some places, and on some occasions, a quarter of an hour's *grace* is given. This depends on custom, and it is always better not to avail yourself of it. In Philadelphia it is necessary to be punctual to a second, for there everybody breathes by the State-house clock If you make an appointment to meet anywhere, your body must be in a right line with the frame of the door at the instant the first stroke of the great clock sounds. If you are a moment later, your character is gone. It is useless to plead the evidence of your watch, or detention by a friend. You read your condemnation in the action of the old fellows who, with polite regard to your feelings, simultaneously pull out their vast chronometers, as you enter. The tardy man is worse off than the murderer. *He* may be pardoned by one person, (the Governor); the unpunctual is pardoned by none. *Haud inexpectus loquor.*

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If you make an appointment with another at your own house, you should be invisible to the rest of the world, and consecrate your time solely to him.

If you make an appointment with a lady, especially if it be upon a promenade, or other public place, you must be there a little before the time.

If you accept an appointment at the house of a public officer, or a man of business, be very punctual, transact the affair with despatch, and retire the moment it is finished.

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Chapter IX - Dinner

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The hour of dinner has been said, by Dr. Johnson, to be the most important hour in civilized life. The etiquette of the dinner-table has a prominence commensurate with the dignity of the ceremony. Like the historian of Peter Bell, we commence at the commencement, and thence proceed to the moment when you take leave officially, or vanish unseen.

In order to dine, the first requisite is—to be invited. The length of time which the invitation precedes the dinner is always proportioned to the grandeur of the occasion, and varies from two days to two weeks. To an invitation received less than two days in advance, you will lose little by replying in the negative, for as it was probably sent as soon as the preparations of the host commenced, you may be sure that there will be little on the table fit to eat. Those abominations, y'clept "plain family dinners," eschew like the plague.

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You reply to a note of invitation immediately, and in the most direct and unequivocal terms. If you accept, you arrive at the house rigorously at the hour specified. It is equally inconvenient to be too late and to be too early. If you fall into the latter error, you find every thing in disorder; the master of the house is in his dressing-room, changing his waistcoat; the lady is still in the pantry; the fire not yet lighted in the parlour. If by accident or thoughtlessness you arrive too soon, you may pretend that you called to inquire the exact hour at which they dine, having mislaid the note, and then retire to walk for an appetite. If you are too late, the evil is still greater, and indeed almost without a remedy. Your delay spoils the dinner and destroys the appetite and temper of the guests; and you yourself are so much embarrassed at the inconvenience you have occasioned, that you commit a thousand errors at table. If you do not reach the house until dinner is served, you had better retire to a restaurateurs, and thence send an apology, and not interrupt the harmony of the courses by awkward excuses and cold acceptances.

When the guests have all entered, and been presented to one another, if any delay occurs, the conversation should be of the lightest and least exciting kind; mere common-places about the weather and late arrivals. You should not amuse the company by animated relations of one

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person who has just cut his throat from ear to ear, or of another who, the evening before, was choked by a tough beef-steak and was buried that morning.

When dinner is announced, the inviter rises and requests all to walk to the dining-room. He then leads the way, that they may not be at a loss to know whither they should proceed. Each gentleman offers his arm to a lady, and they follow in solemn order.

The great distinction now becomes evident between the host and the guests, which distinction it is the chief effort of good breeding to remove. To perform faultlessly the honours of the table, is one of the most difficult things in society: it might indeed be asserted without much fear of contradiction, that no man has as yet ever reached exact propriety in his office as host, has hit the mean between exerting himself too much and too little. His great business is to put every one entirely at his ease, to gratify all his desires, and make him, in a word, absolutely contented with men and things. To accomplish this, he must have the genius of tact to perceive, and the genius of finesse to execute; ease and frankness of manner; a knowledge of the world that nothing can surprise; a calmness of temper that nothing can disturb, and a kindness of disposition that can never be exhausted. When he receives others, he must be content to forget

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himself; he must relinquish all desire to shine, and even all attempts to please his guests by conversation, and rather, do all in his power to let them please one another. He behaves to them without agitation, without affectation; he pays attention without an air of protection; he encourages the timid, draws out the silent, and directs conversation without Sustaining it himself. He who does not do all this, is wanting in his duty as host; he who does, is more than mortal.

When all are seated, the gentleman at the head of the table sends soup to every one, from the pile of plates which stand at his right hand. He helps the person at his right hand first, and at his left next, and so through the whole.

There are an immensity of petty usages at the dinner table, such as those mentioned in the story of the Abb, Delille and the Abb, Cossen in the Introduction to this volume, which it would be trifling and tedious to enumerate hers, and which will be learned by an observing man after assisting at two or three dinners.

You should never ask a gentleman or lady at the table to help you to any thing, but always apply to the servants.

Your first duty at the table is to attend to the wants of the

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lady who sits next to you, the second, to attend to your own. In performing the first, you should take care that the lady has all that she wishes, yet without appearing to direct your attention too much to her plate, for nothing is more ill-bred than to watch a person eating. If the lady be something of a *gourmande,* and in ever-zealous pursuit of the aroma of the wing of a pigeon, should raise an unmanageable portion to her mouth, you should cease all conversation with her, and look steadfastly into the opposite part of the room.

In France, a dish, after having been placed upon the table for approval, is removed by the servants, and carved at a sideboard, and after. wards handed to each in succession. This is extremely convenient, and worthy of acceptation in this country. But unfortunately it does not as yet prevail here. Carving therefore becomes an indispensable branch of a gentleman's education. You should no more think of going to a dinner without a knowledge of this art, than you should think of going without your shoes. The gentleman of the house selects the various dishes in the order in which they should be cut, and invites some particular one to perform the office. It is excessively awkward to be obliged to decline, yet it is a thing too often occurring in,his country. When you carve, you should never rise from your seat.

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Some persons, in helping their guests, or recommending dishes to their taste, preface every such action with an eulogy on its merits, and draw every bottle of wine with an account of its virtues. Others, running into the contrary extreme, regret or fear that each dish is not exactly as it should be; that the cook, etc., etc. Both of these habits are grievous errors. You should leave it to your guests alone to approve, or suffer one of your intimate friends who is present, to vaunt your wine. When you draw a bottle, merely state its age and brand, and of what particular vintage it is.

Do not insist upon your guests partaking of particular dishes, never ask persons more than once, and never put anything by force upon their plates. It is extremely ill-bred, though extremely common, to press one to eat of anything. You should do all that you can to make your guests feel themselves at home, which they never can do while you are so constantly forcing upon their minds the recollection of the difference between yourself and them. You should never send away your own plate until all your guests have finished.

Before the cloth is removed you do not drink wine unless with another. If you are asked to take wine it is uncivil to refuse. When you drink with another, you catch the person's eye and bow with politeness. It is not necessary

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to say anything, but smile with an air of great kindness.

Some one who sits near the lady of the house, should, immediately upon the removal of the soup, request the honor of drinking wine with her, which movement is the signal for all the others. If this is not done, the master of the house should select some lady. *He* never asks gentlemen, but they ask him; this is a refined custom, attended to in the best company.

If you have drunk with every one at the table, and wish more wine, you must wait till the cloth is removed. The decanter is then sent round from the head of the table, each person fills his glass, and all the company drinks the Health of all the company. It is enough if you bow to the master and mistress of the house, and to your opposite neighbour. After this the ladies retire. Some one rises to open the door for them, and they go into the parlour, the gentlemen remaining to drink more wine.

After the ladies have retired, the service of the decanters is done. The host draws the bottles which have been standing in a wine cooler since the commencement of the dinner. The bottle goes down the left side and up the right, and the same bottle never passes twice. If you do not drink, always pass the bottle to your neighbour.

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At dinner never call for ale or porter; it is coarse, and injures the taste for wine.

It was formerly the custom to drink *porter* with cheese. One of the few real improvements introduced by the "Napoleon of the realms of fashion" was to banish this tavern liquor and substitute *port.* The dictum of Brummell was thus enunciated: "A gentleman never *malts,* he *ports*."

A gentleman should always express his preference for some one sort of wine over others; because, as there is always a natural preference for one kind, if you say that you are indifferent, you show that you are not accustomed to drink wines. Your preference should not of course be guided by your real disposition; if you are afflicted by nature with a partiality for port, you should never think of indulging it except in your closet with your chamber-door locked. The only index of choice is fashion;—either permanent fashion (if the phrase may be used), or some temporary fashion created by the custom of any individual who happens to rule for a season in society. Port was drunk by our ancestors, but George the Fourth, upon his accession to the regency, announced his royal preference for sherry. It has since been fashionable to like sherry. This is what we call a *permanent* fashion.

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Champagne wine is drunk after the removal of the first cloth; that is to say, between the meats and the dessert. One servant goes round and places before each guest a proper- shaped glass; another follows and fills them, and they are immediately drunk. Sometimes this is done twice in succession. The bottle does not again make its appearance, and it would excite a stare to ask at a later period for a glass of champagne wine.

If you should happen to be blessed with those rely nuisances, children, and should be entertaining company, never allow them to be brought in after dinner, unless they are particularly asked for, and even then it is better to say they are at school. Some persons, with the intention of paying their court to the father, express great desire to see the sons; but they should have some mercy upon the rest of the party, particularly as they know that they themselves would be the most disturbed of all, if their urgent entreaty was granted.

Never at any time, whether at a formal or a familiar dinner party, commit the impropriety of talking to a servant: nor ever address any remark about one of them to one of the party. Nothing can be more ill-bred. You merely ask for what you want in a grave and civil tone, and wait with patience till your order is obeyed.

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It is a piece of refined coarseness to employ the fingers instead of the fork to effect certain operations at the dinner table, and on some other similar occasions. To know how and when to follow the fashion of Eden, and when that of more civilized life, is one of the many points which distinguish a gentleman from one not a gentleman; or rather, in this case, which shows the difference between a man of the world, and one who has not "the tune of the time."[2] Cardinal Richelieu detected an adventurer who passed himself off for a nobleman, by his helping himself to olives with a fork. He might have applied the test to a vast many other things. Yet, on the other hand, a gentleman would lose his reputation, if he were to take up a piece of sugar with his fingers and not with the sugar-tongs.

It is of course needless to say that your own knife should never be brought near to the butter, or salt, or to a dish of any kind. If, however, a gentleman should send his plate for anything near you, and a knife cannot be obtained immediately, you may skillfully avoid all censure by using *his* knife to procure it.

When you send your plate for anything, you leave your knife and fork upon it, crossed. When you have done, you lay both in parallel lines on one side. A render who occupies himself about greater matters, may smile at this

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precept. It may, indeed, be very absurd, yet such is the tyranny of custom, that if you were to cross your knife and fork when you have finished, the most reasonable and strong-minded man at the table could not help setting you down, in his own mind, as a low-bred person. *Magis sequor quam probo.*

The chief matter of consideration at the dinner table, as indeed everywhere else in the life of a gentleman, is to be perfectly composed and at his ease. He speaks deliberately, he performs the most important act of the day as if he were performing the most ordinary. Yet there is no appearance of trifling or want of gravity in his manner; he maintains the dignity which is becoming on so vital an occasion. He performs all the ceremonies, yet in the style of one who performs no *ceremony* at all. He goes through all the complicated duties of the scene, as if he were "to the manner born."

Some persons, who cannot draw the nice distinction between too much and too little, desiring to be particularly respectable, make a point of appearing unconcerned and quite indifferent to enjoyment at dinner. Such conduct not only exhibits a want of sense and a profane levity, but is in the highest degree rude to your obliging host. He has taken a great deal of trouble to give you pleasure, and it is your business to be, or at

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least to appear, pleased. It is one thing, indeed, to stare and wonder, and to ask for all the delicacies on the table in the style of a person who had lived all his life behind a counter, but it is quite another to throw into your manner the spirit and gratified air of a man who is indeed not unused to such matters, but who yet esteems them at their fall value.

When the Duke of Wellington was at Paris, as commander of the allied armies, he was invited to dine with Cambaceres, one of the most distinguished statesmen and *gourmands* of the time of Napoleon. In the course of the dinner, his host having helped him to some particularly *recherche* dish, expressed a hope that he found it agreeable. "Very good," said the hero of Waterloo, who was probably speculating upon what he would have done if Blucher had not come up: "Very good; but I really do not care what I eat." "Good God!" exclaimed Cambaceres,—as he started back and dropped his fork, quite "frighted from his propriety,"—"Don't care what you eat! What *did* you come here for, then?"

After the wine is finished, you retire to the drawing-room, where the ladies are assembled; the master of the house rising first from the table, but going out of the room last. If you wish to go before this, you must vanish unseen.

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We conclude this chapter by a word of important counsel to the host:—Never make an apology.

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Chapter X - Travelling

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It is an extremely difficult affair to travel in a coach, with perfect propriety. Ten to one the person next to you is an English nobleman *incognito*; and a hundred to one, the man opposite to you is a brute or a knave. To behave so that you may not be uncivil to the one, nor a dupe to the other, is an art of some niceness.

As the seats are assigned to passengers in the order in which they are booked, you should send to have your place taken a day or two before the journey, so that you may be certain of a back seat. It is also advisable to arrive at the place of departure early, so that you assume your place without dispute.

When women appear at the door of the coach to obtain admittance, it is a matter of some question to know exactly what conduct it is necessary to pursue. If the women are servants, or persons in a low rank of life, I do not see upon what ground of politeness or decency you

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are called upon to yield your seat. *Etiquette,* and the deference due to ladies have, of course, no operation in the case of such persons. Chivalry—(and the gentleman is the legitimate descendant of the knight of old)—was ever a devotion to rank rather than to sex. Don Quixotte, or Sir Piercy Shafestone would not willingly have given place to servant girls. And upon considerations of humanity and regard to weakness, the case is no stronger. Such people have nerves considerably more robust than you have, and are quite as capable of riding backwards, or the top, as yourself. The only reason for *politeness* in the case is, that perhaps the other passengers are of the same standing with the women, and might eject you from the window if you refuse to give place.

If *ladies* enter—and a gentleman distinguishes them in an instant—the case is altered. The sooner you move the better is it for yourself, since the rest will in the end have to concede, and you will give yourself a reputation among the party and secure a better seat, by rising at once.

The principle that guides you in society is politeness; that which guides you in a coach is good humour. You lay aside all attention to form, and all strife after effect, and take instead, kindness of disposition and a willingness to please. You pay a constant regard to the comfort of your.

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fellow- prisoners. You take care not to lean upon the shoulder of your neighbour when you sleep. You are attentive not to make the stage wait for you at the stopping-places. When the ladies get out, you offer them your arm, and you do the same when the coachman is driving rapidly over a rough place. You should make all the accommodations to others, which you can do consistently with your own convenience; for, after all, the individuals are each like little nations; and as, in the one case, the first duty is to your country, so in the other, the first duty is to yourself.

Some surly creatures, upon entering a coach, wrap about their persons a great coat of cloth, and about their minds a mantle of silence, which are not thrown off during the whole journey. This is doing more harm to themselves than to others. You should make a point of conversing with an appearance of entire freedom, though with real reserve, with all those who are so disposed.

One purpose and pleasure of travelling is to gain information, and to observe the various characters of persons. You will be asked by others about the road you passed over, and it will be awkward if you can give no account of it. Converse, therefore, with all. Relate amusing stories, chiefly of other countries, and even of other times, so as not to offend any one. If engaged in

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discussion—and a coach is almost the only place where discussion should *not* be avoided—state facts and arguments rather than opinions. Never answer impudent questions-and never ask them.

At the meals which occur during a journey, you see beautiful exemplification of the *dictum* of Hobbes, "that war is the natural state of man." The entire scene is one of unintermitted war of every person with every other person, with the viands, and with good manners. You open your mouth only to admit edibles and to bellow to the waiters. Your sole object is yourself. You drink wine without asking your neighbour to join you; and if he should be so silly as to ask you to hand him some specified dish, you blandly comply; but in the passage to him, you transfer the whole of its contents to your own plate. There is no halving in these matters. Rapacity, roaring, and rapidity are the three requisites for dining during a journey. When you have resumed your seat in the coach, you are as bland as a morning in spring.

Never assume any unreal importance in a stage-coach, founded on the ignorance of your fellows, and their inability to detect it. It is excessively absurd, and can only gratify a momentary and foolish vanity; for, whenever you might make use of your importance, you would probably be at once discovered. There is an

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admirable paper upon this point in one of Johnson's Adventurers.

The friendship which has subsisted between travellers terminates with the journey. When you get out, a word, a bow, and the most unpleasant act of life is finished and forgotten.

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Chapter XI - Balls

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Invitations to a ball should be issued at least ten days in advance, in order to give an opportunity to the men to clear away engagements; and to women, time to prepare the artillery of their toilet. Cards of invitation should be sent—not notes.

Upon the entrance of ladies, or persons entitled to deference, the master of the house precedes them across the room: he addresses compliments to them, and will lose his life to procure them seats.

While dancing with a lady whom you have never seen before, you should not talk to her much.

The master of the ceremonies must take care that every lady dances, and press into service for that purpose these young gentlemen who are hanging round the room like fossils. If desired by him to dance with a particular lady you should refuse on no account.

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If you have no ear, that is, a false one, never dance.

To usurp the seat of a person who is dancing is the height of incivility.

Never go to a public ball.

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Chapter XII - Funerals

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When any member of a family is dead, it is customary to send intelligence of the misfortune to all who have been connected with the deceased in relations of business or friendship. The letters which are sent contain a special invitation to assist at the funeral.

An invitation of this sort should never he refused, though, of course, you do not send a reply, for no other reason that I know of, excepting the impossibility of framing any formula of acceptance.

You render yourself at the house an hour or two after the time specified. If you were to sit long in the mournful circle you might be rendered unfit for doing any thing for a week.

Your dress is black, and during the time of waiting you compose your visage into a "tristful 'haviour," and lean in silent solemnity upon the top of your cane, thinking

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about— last night's party. This is a necessary hypocrisy, and assists marvellously the sadness of the ceremony. You walk in a procession with the others, your carriage following in the street. The first places are yielded to the relations of the deceased.

The coffins of persons of distinction are carried in the hands of bearers, who walk with their hats off.

You walk with another, in seemly order, and converse in a low tone; first upon the property of the defunct, and next upon the politics of the day. You walk with the others into the church, where service is said over the body. It is optional to go to the grave or not. When you go away, you enter your carriage and return to your business or your pleasures.

A funeral in the morning, a ball in the evening,"—so runs the world away."

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Chapter XIII - Servants

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Servants are a necessary evil. He who shall contrive to obviate their necessity, or remove their inconveniences, will render to human comfort a greater benefit than has yet been conferred by all the useful-knowledge societies of the age. They are domestic spies, who continually embarrass the intercourse of the members of a family, or possess themselves of private information that renders their presence hateful, and their absence dangerous. It is a rare thing to see persons who are not controlled by their servants. Theirs, too, is not the only kitchen cabinet which begins by serving and ends by ruling.

If we judge from the frequency and inconvenience of an opposite course, we should say that the most important precept to be observed is, never to be afraid of your servants. We have known many ladies who, without any reason in the world, lived in a state of perfect subjugation to their servants, who were afraid to give a direction, and who submitted to disobedience and insult, where no

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danger could be apprehended from discharging them.

If a servant offends you by any trifling or occasional omission of duty, reprove the fault with mild severity; if the error be repeated often, and be of a gross description, never hesitate, but discharge the servant instantly, without any altercation of language. You cannot easily find another who will serve you worse.

As for those precautions which are ordinarily taken, to secure the procurence of good servants, they are, without exception, utterly useless. The author of the Rambler has remarked, that a written *character* of a servant is worth about as much as a discharge from the Old Bailey. I never, but once, took any trouble to inquire what reputation a servant had held in former situations. On that occasion, I heard that I had engaged the very Shakespeare of menials,— Aristides was not more honest,—Zeno more truth-telling,—nor Abdiel more faithful. This fellow, after insulting me daily for a week, disappeared with my watch and three pair of boots.

Those offices which profess to recommend good domestics, are "bosh,—nothing." In nine cases out of ten, the keepers are in league with the servants; and in the tenth, ignorance, dishonesty, or carelessness will prevent any benefit resulting from,their "intelligence." All that

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you can do is, to take the most decent creature who applies; trust in Providence, and lock every thing up.

Never speak harshly, or superciliously, or hastily to a servant. There are many little actions which distinguish, to the eye of the most careless observer, a gentleman from one not a gentleman; but there is none more striking than the manner of addressing a servant. Issue your commands with gravity and gentleness, and in a reserved manner. Let your voice be composed, but avoid a tone of familiarity or sympathy with them. It is better in addressing them to use a higher key of voice, and not to suffer it to fall at the end of a sentence. The best bred man whom we ever had the pleasure of meeting, always employed, in addressing servants, such forms of speech as these—"I'll thank you for so and so,"—" Such a thing, if you please,"—with a gentle tone, but very elevated key. The perfection of manner, in this particular, is, to indicate by your language, that the performance is a favour, and by your tone that it is a matter of course.

While, however, you practise the utmost mildness and forbearance in your language, avoid the dangerous and common error of exercising too great humanity in action. No servant, from the time of the first Gibeonite downwards, has ever had too much labour imposed upon him; while thousands have been ruined by the mistaken

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kindness of their masters.

Servants should always be allowed, and indeed directed, to go to church on Sunday afternoon. For this purpose, dinner is served earlier on that day than usual. If it can be accomplished, the servants should be induced to attend the same church as the family with whom they live; because there may be reason to fear that if they profess to go elsewhere, they may not go to church at all; and the habit of wandering about the streets with idlers, will speedily ruin the best servant that ever stood behind a chair.

Servants should be directed to announce visitors. This is always done abroad, and is a convenient custom.

Never allow a female servant to enter a parlour. If all the male domestics are gone out, it is better that there should be no attendance at all.

Some ladies are in the habit of amusing their friends with accounts of the difficulty of getting good servants, etc. This denotes decided ill breeding. Such subjects should never be made topics of conversation.

If a servant offends you by any grossness of conduct, never rebuke the offence upon the spot, nor indeed notice

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it at all at the time; for you cannot do it without anger, and without giving rise to a *scene.* Prince Puckler Muskaw was, very properly, turned out of the Travellers' Club for throwing a fork at one of the waiters.

In the house of another, or when there is any company present in your own, never converse with the servants. This most vulgar, but not uncommon, habit, is judiciously censured in that best of novels,—the Zeluco of Dr. Moore.

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Chapter XIV - Fashion

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Fashion is a tyranny founded only on assumption. The principle upon which its influence rests, is one deeply based in the human heart, and one which has long been observed and long practised upon in every department of life. In the literary, the religious, and the political world, it has been an assured and very profitable conclusion, that the public,

"Like women, born to be controlled, Stoops to the forward and the bold."

"Qui sibi fidit, dux regit examen," is a maxim of universal truth. Pococurante, in Candide, was admired for despising Homer and Michel Angelo; he would have gained little distinction by praising them. The judicious application of this rule to society, is the origin of fashion. In despair of attaining greatness of quality, it founds its distinction only on peculiarity.

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We have spoken elsewhere of those complex and very rare accomplishments, whose union is requisite to constitute a gentleman. We know of but one quality which is demanded for a man of fashion,—impudence. An impudence (self-confidence "the wise it call") as impenetrable as the gates of Pandemonium—a coolness and imperturbability of self- admiration, which the boaster in Spencer might envy—a contempt of every decency, as such, and an utter imperviousness to ridicule, —these are the amiable and dignified qualities which serve to rear an empire over the weakness and cowardice of men.

To define the character of that which is changing even while we survey it, is a task of no small difficulty. We imagine that there is only one means by which it may be always described, viz., that it consists in an entire avoidance of all that is natural and rational. Its essence is affectation; effeminacy takes the place of manliness; drawling stupidity, of wit; stiffness and hauteur, of ease and civility; and self-illustration, of a decent and respectful regard to others.

A man of fashion must never allow himself to be pleased. Nothing is more decidedly *de mauvais ton* than any expression of delight. He must never laugh, nor, unless his penetration is very great, must he even smile;

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for he might by ignorance smile at the wrong place or time. All real emotion is to be avoided; all sympathy with the great or the beautiful is to be shunned; yet the liveliest feeling may be exhibited upon the death of a poodle-dog.

At the house of an acquaintance, he must never praise, nor even look, at the pictures, the carpets, the curtains, or the ottomans, because if he did, it might be supposed that he was not accustomed to such things.

About two years ago, it began to be considered improper to pay compliments to women, because if they are not paid gracefully they are awkward, and to pay them gracefully is difficult. At the present time it is considered dangerous to a man's pretensions to fashion, in England, to speak to women at all. Women are voted bores, and are to be treated with refined rudeness.

There is no possible system of manners that will serve to exhibit at once the uncivility and the high refinement which should characterize the man of fashion. He must therefore have no manners at all. He must behave with tame and passive insolence, never breaking into active effrontery excepting towards unprotected women and clergymen. Persons of no importance he does not see, and is not conscious of their existence; those who have

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the same standing, he treats with easy scorn, and he acknowledges the distinction of superiors only by patronizing and protecting them. A man of fashion does not despise wealth; he cannot but think *that* valuable which procures to others the honour of paying for his suppers.

Fashion is so completely distinguished from good breeding, that it is even opposed to it. It is in fact a system of refined vulgarity. What, for example can be more vulgar than incessantly *talkin*g about forms and customs? About silver forks and French soup? A gentleman follows these conventional habits; but he follows them as matters of course. He looks upon them as the ordinary and essential customs of refined society. French forks are to him things as indispensable as a table-cloth; and he thinks it as unnecessary to insist upon the one as upon the other. If he sees a person who eats with his knife, he concludes that that person is ignorant of the usages of the world, but he does not shriek and faint away like a Bond-street dandy. If he dines at a table where there are no silver forks, he eats his dinner in perfect propriety with steel, and exhibits, neither by manner nor by speech, that he perceives any error. To be sure, he forms his own opinion about the rank of his entertainer, but he leaves it to such new-made gentry as Mr. Theodore Hook, in his vulgar fashionable novels, to

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harangue about such delinquencies. The vulgarity of insisting upon these matters is scarcely less offensive than the vulgarity of neglecting them. Lady Frances Pelham is but one remove better than a Brancton.

A man of fashion never goes to the theatre; he is waiting for the opera.

He, of course, goes out of town in the summer; or, if he cannot afford to do so, he merely closes his window-shutters, and appears to be gone.

Fashion makes all great things little, and all little things great.

It is commonly said, that it requires more wit to perform the part of the fool in a farce than that of the master. Without intending any offence to the fool by the comparison, we may remark, that qualities of an elevated character are required for the support of the *rol*e of a man of fashion in the solemn farce of life. He must have invention, to vary his absurdities when they cease to be striking; he must have wit enough to obtain the reputation of a great deal more; and he must possess tact to know when and where to crouch, and where and when to insult.

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Brummel, whose career is one of the most extraordinary on record, must have exercised, during the period of his social reign, many qualities of conduct which rank among the highest endowments of our race. For an obscure individual, without fortune or rank, to have conceived the idea of placing himself at the head of society in a country the most thoroughly aristocratic in Europe, relying too upon no other weapon than well-directed insolence; for the same individual to have triumphed splendidly over the highest and the mightiest —to have maintained a contest with royalty itself, and to have come off victorious even in that struggle—for such an one no ordinary faculties must have been demanded. Of the sayings of Brummel which have been preserved, it is difficult to distinguish whether they contain real wit, or are only so sublimely and so absurdly impudent that they look like witty.

We add here a few anecdotes of Brummel, which will serve to show, better than any precepts, the style of conduct which a man of fashion may pursue.

When Brummel was at the height of his power, he was once, in the company of some gentlemen, speaking of the Prince of Wales as a very good sort of man, who behaved himself very decently, *considering circumstances*; some one present offered a wager that he

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would not dare to give a direction to this very good sort of man. Brummel looked astonished at the remark, and declined accepting a wager upon such point. They happened to be dining with the regent the next-day, and after being pretty well fortified. with wine, Brummel interrupted a remark of the prince's, by exclaiming very mildly and naturally, "Wales, ring the bell!" His royal highness immediately obeyed the command, and when the servant entered, said to him, with the utmost coolness and firmness, "Show Mr. Brummel to his carriage." The dandy was not in the least dejected by his expulsion; but meeting the prince regent, walking with a gentleman, the next day in the street, he did not bow to him, but stopping the other, drew him aside and said, in a loud whisper, "Who is that FAT FRIEND of ours?" It must be remembered that the object of this sarcasm was at that time exceedingly annoyed by his increasing corpulency; so manifestly so, that Sheridan remarked, that "though the regent professed himself a Whig, he believed that in his heart he was no friend to *new measures*."

Shortly after this occurrence at Carlton-House, Brummel remarked to one of his friends, that "he had half a mind to cut the young one, and bring old George into fashion."

In describing a short visit which he had paid to a nobleman in the country, he said, that he had only carried

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with him a night-cap and a silver basin to spit in, "Because, you know, it is utterly impossible to spit in clay."

Brummel was once present at a party to which he had not been invited. After he had been some time in the room, the gentleman of the house, willing to mortify him, went up to him and said that he believed that there must be some mistake, as he did not recollect having had the honour of sending him an invitation. "What is the name?" said the other very drawlingly, at the same time affecting to feel in his waistcoat pocket for a card. "Johnson," replied the gentleman. "Jauhnson?" said Brummel, "oh! I remember now that the name was Thaunson (Thompson); and Jauhnson and Thaunson, Thaunson and Jauhnson, you know, are so much the same kind of thing."

Brummel was once asked how much a year he thought would be required to keep a single man in clothes. "Why, with tolerable economy," said he, "I think it might be done for L800."

He once went down to a gentleman's house in the country, without having been asked to do so. He was given to understand, the next morning, that his absence would be more agreeable, and he took his departure.

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Some one having heard of his discomfiture, asked him how he liked the accommodations there. He replied coolly, that "it was a very decent house to spend a single night in."

We have mentioned that this dreaded arbiter of modes had threatened that he would put the prince regent out of fashion. Alas! for the peace of the British monarch, this was not an idle boast. His dangerous rival resolved in the unfathomable recesses of a mind capacious of such things, to commence and to carry on a war whose terror and grandeur should astound society, to administer to audacious royalty a lesson which should never be forgotten, and finally to retire, when retire he must, with mementos of his tremendous power around him, and with the mightiest of the earth at his feet. Inventive and deliberate were the counsels which he meditated; sublime and resolute was the conduct he adopted. He decided, with an originality of genius to which the conqueror of Marengo might have vailed, that the *neck* of the foe was the point at which the first fatal shaft of his excommunicating ire should be hurled. With rapid and decisive energy he concentrated all his powers for instantaneous action. He retired for a day to the seclusion of solitude, to summon and to spur the energies of the most self-reliant mind in Europe, as the lion draws back to gather courage for the leap. As, like the lion, he drew

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back; so, like the lion, did he spring forward upon his prey. At a ball given by the Duchess of Devonshire, when the whole assembly were conversing upon his supposed disgrace, and insulting by their malevolence one whom they had disgusted by their adulation, Brummel suddenly stood in the midst of them. Could it be indeed Brummel? Could it be mortal who thus appeared with such an encincture of radiant glory about his neck? Every eye was upon him, fixed in stupid admiration; every tongue, as it slowly recovered from its speechless paralysis, faltered forth "what a cravat!" What a cravat indeed! Hundreds that had, a moment before, exulted in unwonted freedom, bowed before it with the homage of servile adoration. What a cravat! There it stood; there was no doubting its entity, no believing it an illusion. There it stood, smooth and stiff, yet light and almost transparent; delicate as the music of Ariel, yet firm as the spirit of Regulus; bending with the grace of Apollo's locks, yet erect with the majesty of the Olympian Jove: without a wrinkle, without an indentation. What a cravat! The regent "saw and shook;" and uttering a faint gurgle from beneath the wadded bag which surrounded his royal thorax, he was heard to whisper with dismay, "D—n him! what a cravat!" The triumph was complete.

It is stated, upon what authority we know not, that his

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royal highness, after passing a sleepless night in vain conjectures, despatched at an early hour, one of his privy- counsellors to Brummel, offering *carte blanche* if he would disclose the secret of that mysterious cravat. But the "*atrox animus Catonis*" disdained the bribe. He preferred being supplicated, to being bought, by kings. "Go," said he to the messenger, with the spirit of Marius mantling in his veins, "Go, and tell *you*r master that you have seen *his* master."

For the truth of another anecdote, connected with this cravat, we have indisputable evidence. A young nobleman of distinguished talents and high pretensions as to fortune and rank, saw this fatal band, and eager to advance himself in the rolls of fashion, retired to his chamber to endeavour to penetrate the method of its construction. He tried every sort of known, and many sorts of unknown stiffeners to accomplish the end—paper and pasteboard, and wadding, shavings, and shingles, and planks,—all were vainly experienced. Gargantua could not have exhibited a greater invention of expedients than he did; but vainly. After a fortnight of the closest application, ardour of study and anxiety of mind combined, brought him to the brink of the grave. His mother having ascertained the origin of his complaint, waited upon Brummel, who was the only living man that could remove it. She implored him, by

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every human motive, to say but one word, to save the life of her son and prevent her own misery. But the tyrant was immoveable, and the young man expired a victim of his sternness.

When, at length, yielding to that strong necessity which no man can control, Brummel was obliged, like Napoleon, to abdicate, the mystery of that mighty cravat was unfolded. There was found, after his departure to Calais, written on sheet of paper upon his table, the following epigram of scorn: "STARCH IS THE MAN." The cravat of Brummel was merely- -starched! Henceforth starch was introduced into every cravat in Europe.

Brummel still lives, an obscure consul in a petty European town.

Physically there is something to command our admiration in the history of a man who thus lays at his mercy all ranks of men,—the lofty and the low, the great, the powerful and the vain: but morally and seriously, no character is more despicable than that of the mere man of fashion, Seeking nothing but notoriety, his path to that end is over the ruins of all that is worthy in our nature. He knows virtue only to despise it; he makes himself acquainted with human feelings only to outrage them. He

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commences his career beyond the limits of decency, and ends it far in the regions of infamy. Feared by all and respected by none, hated by his worshippers and despised by himself, he rules,—an object of pity and contempt: and when his power is past, his existence is forgotten; he lives on in an, oblivion which is to him worse than death, and the stings of memory goad him to the grave.

The devotee of fashion is a trifler unworthy of his race; the *mere* gentleman is a character which may in time become somewhat tiresome; there is a just mean between the two, where a better conduct than either is to be found. It is that of a man who, yielding to others, still maintains his self- respect, and whose concessions to folly are controlled by good sense; who remembers the value of trifles without forgetting the importance of duties, and resolves so to regulate his conduct that neither others may be offended by his stiffness, nor himself have to regret his levity.

Live therefore among men—to conclude our homily after the manner of Quarles—live therefore among men, like them, yet not disliking thyself; and let the hues of fashion be reflected from thee, but let them not enter and colour thee within.

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Chapter XV - Miscellaneous

*

There is nothing more ill bred in the world than continual talking about good breeding.

You should never employ the word "*genteel*;" the proper word is "*respectable.*"

If you are walking down the street with another person on your arm, and stop to say something to one of your friends, do not commit the too common and most awkward error of introducing such persons to one another. Never introduce morning visitors, who happen to meet in your parlour without being acquainted. If *you* should be so introduced, remember that the acquaintance afterwards goes for nothing: you have not the slightest right to expect that the other should ever speak to you.

If you wish to be introduced to a lady, you must always have her consent previously asked; this formality it is not necessary to observe in the case of gentlemen alone.

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Presents are the gauge of friendship. They also serve to increase it, and give it permanence.

Among friends presents ought to be made of things of small value; or, if valuable, their worth should be derived from the style of the workmanship, or from some accidental circumstance, rather than from the inherent and solid richness. Especially never offer to a lady a gift of great cost: it is in the highest degree indelicate, and looks as if you were desirous of placing her under an obligation to you, and of buying her good will. The gifts made by ladies to gentlemen are of the most refined nature possible: they should be little articles not purchased, but deriving a priceless value as being the offspring of their gentle skill; a little picture from their pencil, or a trifle from their needle.

To persons much your superiors, or gentlemen whom you do not know intimately, there is but one species of appropriate present—game.

If you make a present, and it is praised by the receiver, you should not yourself commence undervaluing it. If one is offered to you, always accept it; and however small it may be, receive it with civil and expressed thanks, without any kind of affectation. Avoid all such

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deprecatory phrases, as "I fear I rob you," etc.

To children, the only presents which you offer are sugar-plums and bon-bons.

Avoid the habit of employing French words in English conversation; it is in extremely bad taste to be always employing such expressions as *ci-devant, soi-disant, en masse, couleur de rose,* etc. Do not salute your acquaintances with *bon jour,* nor reply to every proposition, *volontiers.*

In speaking of French cities and towns, it is a mark of refinement in education to pronounce them rigidly according to English rules of speech. Mr. Fox, the best French scholar, and one of the best bred men in England, always sounded the x in *Bourdeaux,* and the s in Calais, and on all occasions pronounced such names just as they are written.

In society, avoid having those peculiar preferences for some subjects, which are vulgarly denominated. "*hobby horses.*" They make your company a *bore* to all your friends; and some kind-hearted creature will take advantage of them and *trot* you, for the amusement of the company.

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A certain degree of reserve, or the appearance of it, should be maintained in your intercourse with your most intimate friends. To ordinary acquaintances retain the utmost reserve- -never allowing them to read your feelings, not, on the other hand, attempting to take any liberties with them. Familiarity of manner is the greatest vice of society. "Ah! allow me, my dear fellow," says a rough voice, and at the same moment a thumb and finger are extended into my snuff-box, which, in removing their prey drop half of it upon my clothes,—I look up, and recognize a person to whom I was introduced by mistake last night at the opera. I would be glad to have less fellowship with such *fellows.* In former times great philosophers were said to have demons for familiars,—thereby indicating that a familiar man is the very devil.

Remember, that all deviations from prescribed forms, on common occasions, are vulgar; such as sending invitations, or replies, couched in some unusual forms of speech. Always adhere to the immemorial phrase, —"Mrs. X. requests the honour of Mr, Y.'s company," and "Mr. Y. has the honour of accepting Mrs. X.'s polite invitation." Never introduce persons with any outlandish or new-coined expressions; but perform the operation with mathematical precision—"Mr. A., Mr. A'; Mr. A', Mr. A."

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When two gentlemen are walking with a lady in the street, they should not be both upon the same side of her, but one of them should walk upon the outside and the other upon the inside.

When you walk with a lady, even if the lady be young and unmarried, offer your arm to her. This is always done in France, and is practised in this country by the best bred persons. To be sure, this is done only to married women in France, because unmarried women never walk alone with gentlemen, but as in America the latter have the same freedom as the former, this custom should here be extended to them.

If you are walking with a woman who has your arm, and you cross the street, it is better not to disengage your arm, and go round upon the outside. Such effort evinces a palpable attention to form, and *that* is always to be avoided.

A woman should never take the arms of two men, one being upon either side; nor should a man carry a woman upon each arm. The latter of these iniquities is practised only in Ireland; the former perhaps in Kamskatcha. There are, to be sure, some cases in which it is necessary for the protection of the women, that they should both take his arm, as in coming home from a concert, or in passing,

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on any occasion, through a crowd.

When you receive company in your own house, you should never be much dressed. This is a circumstance of the first importance in good breeding.

A gentleman should never use perfumes; they are agreeable, however, upon ladies.

Avoid the use of proverbs in conversation, and all sorts of cant phrases. This error is, I believe, censured by Lord Chesterfield, and is one of the most offensively vulgar things which a person can commit. We have frequently been astonished to hear such a slang phrase as "the whole hog" used by persons who had pretensions to very superior standing. We would be disposed to apply to such an expression a criticism of Dr. Johnson's, which rivals it in Coarseness: "It has not enough salt to keep it from stinking, enough wit to prevent its being offensive." We do not wish to advocate any false refinement, or to encourage any cockney delicacy: but we may be decent without being affected. The stable language and raft humour of Crockett and Downing may do very well to amuse one in a morning paper, but it exhibits little wit and less good sense to adopt them in the drawing-room. This matter should be "reformed altogether."

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If a plate be sent to you, at dinner, by the master or mistress of the house, you should always take it, without offering it to all your neighbours as was in older times considered necessary. The spirit of antique manners consisted in exhibiting an attention to ceremony; the spirit of modern manners consists in avoiding all possible appearance of form. The old custom of deferring punctiliously to others was awkward and inconvenient. For, the person, in favor of whom the courtesy was shown, shocked at the idea of being exceeded in politeness, of course declined it, and a plate was thus often kept vibrating between two bowing mandarins, till its contents were cold, and the victims of ceremony were deprived of their dinner. In a case like this, to reverse the decision which the host has made as to the relative standing of his guests, is but a poor compliment to him, as it seems to reprove his choice, and may, besides, materially interfere with his arrangements by rendering *unhelped* a person whom he supposes attended to.

The same avoidance of too much attention to yielding place is proper in most other cases. Shenstone, in some clever verses, has ridiculed the folly; and Goldsmith, in his "Vicar," has censured the inconvenience, of such outrageous formality. These things are now managed better. One person yields and another accepts without any controversy.

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When you are helped to anything at a dinner table, do not wait, with your plate untouched, until others have begun to eat. This stiff-piece of mannerism is often occurring in the country, and indeed among all persons who are not thoroughly bred. As soon as your plate is placed before you, you should take up your knife and arrange the table furniture around you, if you do not actually eat.

As to the instruments by which the operation of dining is conducted, it is a matter of much consequence that entire propriety should be observed as to their use. We have said nothing about the use of silver forks, because we do not write for savages; and where, excepting among savages, shall we find any who at present eat with other than a French fork?. There are occasionally to be found some ancients, gentlemen of the old school, as it is termed, who persist in preferring steel, and who will insist on calling for a steel fork if there is none on the table. They consider the modem custom an affectation, and deem that all affectation should be avoided. They tread upon the pride of Plato, with more pride. There is often affectation in shunning affectation. It is better in things not material to submit to the established habits, especially when, as in the present case, the balance of convenience is decidedly on the part of fashion. The ordinary custom among well bred persons, is as follows: —soup is taken with a spoon. Some foolish *fashionables*

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employ a fork! They might as well make use of a broomstick. The fish which follows is eaten with a fork, a knife not being used at all. The fork is held in the right hand, and a piece of bread in the left. For any dish in which cutting is not indispensable, the same arrangement is correct. When you have upon your plate, before the dessert, anything partially liquid, or any sauces, you must not take them up with a knife, but with a piece of bread, which is to be saturated with the juices, and then lifted to the mouth. If such an article forms part of the dessert, you should eat it with a spoon. In carving, steel instruments alone are employed. For fowls a peculiar knife is used, having the blade short and the handle very long. For fish a broad and pierced silver blade is used.

A dinner—we allude to *dinner-parties*—in this country, is generally despatched with too much hurry. We do not mean, that persons commonly eat too fast, but that the courses succeed one another too precipitately. Dinner is the last operation of the day, and there is no subsequent business which demands haste. It is usually intended, especially when there are no ladies, to sit at the table till nine, ten, or eleven o'clock, and it is more agreeable that the *eating* should be prolonged through a considerable portion of the entire time. The conveniences of digestion also require more deliberation, and it would therefore not be unpleasant if an interval of a quarter of an hour or half

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an hour were allowed to intervene between the meats and the dessert.

At dinner, avoid taking upon your plate too many things at once. One variety of meat and one kind of vegetable is the *maximum.* When you take another sort of meat, or any dish not properly a vegetable, you always change your plate.

The fashion of dining inordinately late in this country is foolish. It is borrowed from England without any regard to the difference in circumstances between the two nations. In London, the whole system of daily duties is much later. The fact of parliament's sitting during the evening and not in the morning, tends to remove the active part of the day to a much more advanced hour. When persons rise at ten or two o'clock, it is not to be expected that they should dine till eight or twelve in the evening. There is nothing of this sort in France. There they dine at three, or earlier. We have known some fashionable dinners in different cities in this country at so late an hour as eight or nine o'clock. This is absurd, where the persons have all breakfasted at eight in the morning. From four o'clock till five varies the proper hour for a dinner party here.

Never talk about politics at a dinner table or in a drawing

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room.

When you are going into a company it is of advantage to run over in your mind, beforehand, the topics of conversation which you intend to bring up, and to arrange the manner in which you will introduce them. You may also refresh your general ideas upon the subjects, and run through the details of the few very brief and sprightly anecdotes which you are going to repeat; and also have in readiness one or two brilliant phrases or striking words which you will use upon occasion. Further than this it is dangerous to make much preparation. If you commit to memory long speeches with the design of delivering them, your conversation will become formal, and you will be negligent of the observations of your company. It will tend also to impair that habit of readiness and quickness which it is necessary to cultivate in order to be agreeable.

You must be very careful that you do not repeat the same anecdotes or let off the same good things twice to the same person. Richard Sharpe, the "conversationist" as he was called in London, kept a regular book of entry, in which he recorded where and before whom he had uttered severally his choice sayings. The celebrated Bubb Doddington prepared a manuscript book of original *faceti',* which he was accustomed to read over when he

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expected any distinguished company, trusting to an excellent memory to preserve him from iteration.

If you accompany your wife to a ball, be very careful not to dance with her.

The lady who gives a ball dances but little, and always selects her partners.

If you are visited by any company whom you wish to drive away forever, or any friends whom you wish to alienate, entertain them by reading to them your own productions.

If you ask a lady to dance, and she is engaged, do not prefer a request for her hand at the next set after that, because she may be engaged for that also, and for many more; and you would have to run through a long list of interrogatories, which would be absurd and awkward.

A gentleman must not expect to shine in society, even the most frivolous, without a considerable stock of knowledge. He must be acquainted with facts rather than principles. He needs no very sublime sciences; but a knowledge of biography and literary history, of the fine arts, as painting, engraving, music, etc., will be of great service to him.

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Some men are always seen in the streets with an umbrella under their arm. Such a foible may be permitted to such men as Mr. Southey and the Duke of Wellington: but in ordinary men it looks like affectation, and the monotony is exceedingly *boring* to the sight.

To applaud at a play is not *fashionable*; but it is *respectable* to evince by a gentle concurrence of one finger and a hand that you perceive and enjoy a good stroke in an actor.

If you are at a concert, or a private musical party, never beat time with your feet or your cane. Nothing is more unpleasant.

Few things are more agreeable or more difficult, than to relate anecdotes with entire propriety. They should be introduced gracefully, have fit connexion with the previous remarks, and be in perfect keeping with the company, the subject and the tone of the conversation; they should be short, witty and eloquent, and they should be new but not far-fetched.

In rapid and eager discourse, when persons are excited and impatient, as at a ball or in a promenade, repeat nothing but the spirit and soul of a story, leaping over the

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particulars. There are however many places and occasions in which you may bring out the details with advantage, precisely, but not tediously. When you repeat a true story be always extremely exact. Mem. Not to forget the point of your story, like most narrators.

When you are telling a flat anecdote by mistake, laugh egregiously, that others may do the same: when you repeat a spirited and striking bon mot, be grave and composed, in order that others may not be the same.

For one who has travelled much, to hit the proper medium between too much reserve and too much intrusion, on the subject of his adventures, is not easy. Such a person is expected to give amusement by pleasant histories of his travels, and it is agreeable that he should do so, yet with moderation; he should not reply to every remark by a memoir, commencing, "When I was in Japan."

Rampant witticisms which require one to laugh, are apt to grow fatiguing: it is better to have a sprightly and amusing vein running through your conversation, which, betraying no effort, allows one to be grave without offence, or to smile without pain.

Punning is now decidedly out of date. It is a silly and

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displeasing thing, when it becomes a habit. Some one has called it the wit of fools. It is within the reach of the most trifling, and is often used by them to puzzle and degrade the wise. Whatever may be its merits, it is now out of fashion.

It is respectable to go to church once on Sunday. When you are there, behave with decency. You should never walk in fashionable places on Sunday afternoon. It is notoriously vulgar. If your health requires you to take the air, you should seek some retired street.

In conversation avoid such phrases as "My *dear* sir or madam."

A gentleman is distinguished as much by his composure as by any other quality. His exertions are always subdued, and his efforts easy. He is never surprised into an exclamation or startled by anything. Throughout life he avoids what the French call *scenes,* occasions of exhibition, in which the vulgar delight. He of course has feelings, but he never exhibits any to the world. He hears of the death of his pointer or the loss of an estate with entire calmness when others are present.

It is very difficult for a literary man to preserve the perfect manners and exact semblance of a gentleman. He

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must be able to throw aside all the qualities which authorship tends to stamp so deeply upon him, and thoroughly to despise the cant of the profession. Yet this must be done without any affectation. Upon the whole, unless he has rare tact, he will please as much by going into company with all the marks of his employment upon his manners, than by awkwardly attempting to throw off his load. One would rather see a man with his fingers inked, than to see him nervously striving to cover them with a tattered kid glove. As to literary ladies, they make up their minds to sacrifice all present and personal admiration for future and abiding renown.

It is not considered fashionable to carry a watch. What has a fashionable man to do with time? Besides he never goes into those obscure parts of the town where there are no public clocks, and his servant will tell him when it is time to dress for dinner. A gentleman carries his watch in his pantaloons with a plain black ribbon attached. It is only worthy of a shop-boy to put it in his waistcoat pocket.

Custom allows to men the privilege of taking snuff, however unneat this habit may appear. If you affect the "tangible smell," always take it from a box, and not from your waistcoat pocket or a paper. The common opinion, that Napoleon took snuff from his pocket, (which fact, by

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the way, is denied by Bourrienne,) has for ever driven this convenient custom from the practice of gentlemen, for the same reason that Lord Byron's anti-neckcloth fashion has compelled every man of sense to bind a cravat religiously about his throat. As to taking snuff from a paper, it is vile.

Women should abstain most scrupulously from tobacco, for nothing can be more fatal to their divinity: they should at least avoid it until past fifty;—that is to say, if a woman past fifty can anywhere be found. Chewing is permitted only to galley-slaves and metaphysicians.

It was a favourite maxim of Rivarol, "Do you wish to succeed? Cite proper names." Rivarol is dead in exile, having left behind him little property and less reputation. Judging from all experience, if we were to frame an extreme maxim, it should be, "If you wish to succeed never cite a proper name." It will make you agreeable and hated. Your conversation will be listened to with interest, and your company shunned with horror. You will obtain the reputation of a gossip and a scandal-bearer, and you will soon be obliged either to purchase a razor or apply for a passport. If you are holding a tete-a-tete with a notorious Mrs. Candour, then, indeed, your tongue should be as sharp and nimble as the forked lightning. You must beat her at her own weapons, and

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convince her that it would be dangerous to traduce your character to others.

A bachelor is a person who enjoys everything and pays for nothing; a married man is one that pays for everything and enjoys nothing. The one drives a sulky through life, and is not expected to take care of any one but himself: the other keeps a carriage, which is always too full to afford him a comfortable seat. Be cautious then how you exchange your sulky for a carriage.

In ordinary conversation about persons employ the expressions *men* and *women*; *gentleman* and *lady* are *distinctive* appellations, and not to be used upon general occasions.

You should say *forte-piano,* not *piano-forte*: and the *street door,* not the *front door.*

"A man may have virtue, capacity, and good conduct," says La Bruyere, "and yet be insupportable; the air and manner which we neglect, as little things, are frequently what the world judges us by, and makes them decide for or against us."

In your intercourse with the world you must take persons as they are, and society as you find it. You must never

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oppose the one, nor attempt to alter the other. Society is a harlequin stage, upon which you never appear in your own dress nor without a mask. Keep your real dispositions for your fireside, and your real character for your private friend. In public, never differ from anybody, nor from anything. The *agreeable* man is one who *agrees.*

* * *

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Endnotes

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[1] Charles Butler's Reminiscences

[2] Shakspeare

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